

AMBLESIDE :

G. MIDDLETON, PRINTER.

### SOME MORE DIFFICULTIES OF A GOVERNESS.

During ten years, more or less, I have been occupied in teaching and training children, and in that time I have encountered many serious difficulties, so serious, in fact, that I have wondered whether it would not be better to turn some of them loose into a garden, like our first parents, and keeping, of course, a careful watch that they did not stray too near the dangerous apple, allow them to assimilate there what they could and that alone.

A year's training at the House of Education simplified many of these problems, and the memory of one favourite saying there has often proved very refreshing, when the subject seemed too wide for human grasp, namely, "that there is only one tick to a second." There are, however, many things that I am not sure about, and which I should like to discuss with other Students.

First: There are only 12 hours in the child's day.

Second: Most studies and occupations must occur daily, especially when the child is young.

Third: How many of these are necessary? how many questionable? and how many could be dispensed with altogether?

To put it more shortly still: How far should a child be allowed to grow? and how far should it be trained? For my own part I like to let them grow: They have then so much more scope for becoming individuals and for making character, but certain laws of study must be kept, certain walks must be taken under a governess's supervision, even meals are presided over by her or some one in authority. It is impossible for flowers to grow healthy and straight if they are overshadowed by other plants, and how can a child who is constantly under strong influence develop into an individual of special character? Over and over again I find myself checking the words, thoughts, and ideas, which I should not have myself. I am even annoyed and weary if I do not make them see as I see, and feel as I feel. No way but that way seems exactly right in my eyes, and yet I know full well (and I like to have them liberal-minded), that many others would look at the question from the opposite point of view, which to them again would appear the



only right one. If such an abnormal person as a perfect governess could exist, one might not scruple to allow her to turn out perfect pupils even if they did in the end bear a close resemblance to her, but in consideration that the majority of us are very faulty, it is hardly a beneficial thing that the children should be so uninterruptedly under our supervision. That they do learn to resemble their guardians is a fact patent to every governess of any experience. Compare the letters of teacher and pupil after a few months of tuition, more or less, and the absurd imitation in ideas, manner, and writing, is unmistakeable. I once knew a governess who was always accused of having written to herself when she received a letter from her pupils. It must have been annoying to them, but happily they were quite unconscious of any similarity. It hardly seems right that one should use one's influence to turn out so many girls stamped with the tone of oneself, as if one were a cake-cutter and ruthlessly chopped off any differences between one crust and another, and I think the matter is worthy of much consideration. There are ways of getting over the difficulty, but they do not seem to me thoroughly satisfactory. One way is never to stay too long in the same place. That is a poor solution and, besides, one might do more harm than good. A better way is to give the children as long a time as possible to themselves. Personally it is a great temptation to me to join in their games after the day's work, but it is really better to keep away and to let them rely upon themselves for ideas and conversation. I wish some of you would advise me how to teach self-reliance. To bring out instead of to put in; to find out what possibilities lie in the child's mind; to teach him to find them out, too; and to use them and develop them is a hard thing! Tell me if I am right in some of the ways by which I think it may be done.

Many new scenes, and startling events, many treats, surprises, and new people, should, I think, be avoided for young children. They must not be choked with a surplus of food, only just so much is permissible as will allow healthy growth. Next, there is nothing like the out-of-door environment of the home for education. Here no startling sound or sight astonishes and disturbs, everything is familiar and therefore soothing. The mind, like a plant, takes root, and the leaves of character expand, nourished they know not how. With nothing foreign forced into it the mind then puts forth ideas, the greenness of the trees, the sunset, the lonely river, have an effect upon it which is all unconscious, and from the beauty of Nature it understands Goodness. How much better so

than from the lips of a human being! I think we should be very careful how we approach with our clumsy words this delicate and vast influence. This, however, we may do. We may see that the child lives; lives as it alone can—not as another shows it. Teach it that now is the time for action. Its lessons; its little gardens; its walks, its games, constitute "life" to it at present and from depending upon itself for action it will learn to depend upon itself for thought, and so will grow to say with courage "This is mine; it is no other man's." Few of us will have the honour of training geniuses, but each child should be educated by a standard no lower than that which Emerson's definition of a genius provides, namely: "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men." I hope some one will answer my paper or discuss the question in the next Magazine.

F. R.

#### A DAY IN YOUGHAL.

Of the many beautiful excursions it is possible to make in the south of Ireland, not the least interesting is a journey from Lismore by boat on the Blackwater to Youghal. In the beginning of May it was our good fortune to make such an excursion, and to spend a day in Youghal, where we saw much to help to fill the storehouses of our memories.

We began by driving from Lismore in an outside car, which, after the first experience or so, is a very comfortable vehicle, and was once described by an Irishman as a car "holding two each side if you sits adjacent, and three if you sits familiarlike." We arrived at the spot where a little steam launch was waiting to take us down the Blackwater to Youghal. As we plied our way down the river, the reason for calling the Blackwater "the Rhine of Ireland" became apparent. The trees on its well-wooded banks were coming into leaf, and at no other time in the year could the country be seen to such advantage, a view of the Knockmealdown Mountains in our rear completing the beautiful panorama. On our right we passed Strancally Castle, a building of Gothic architecture, raised to supply the place of an old castle which had